

This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-7 (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting epithelial cancer cells in a biological sample from a mammal, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing the biological sample from the mammal; and
- (b) detecting an increase in copy number of a gene encoding a Pellino 2 polypeptide comprising at least 95% amino acid identity to SEQ ID NO:4 in the biological sample, wherein the Pellino 2 polypeptide binds to an antibody raised against an immunogen comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4, thereby detecting the presence of epithelial cancer cells in the biological sample.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the detecting step further comprises:

- (i) contacting the gene with a probe specific for the gene under conditions in which the probe selectively hybridizes to the gene to form a stable hybridization complex; and
- (ii) detecting the hybridization complex.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 8~~, A method of detecting epithelial cancer cells in a biological sample from a mammal, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing the biological sample from the mammal; and
- (b) detecting an increase in copy number of a gene encoding a Pellino 2 polypeptide comprising at least 95% amino acid identity to SEQ ID NO:4 in the biological sample, wherein the gene encoding the Pellino 2 polypeptide is amplified by a primer set of GATGCTGAAGTCGT CTCATTGG (SEQ ID NO:7) and CCAGTAGTTTAGCCTTTGTGGC TT (SEQ ID NO:8), thereby detecting the presence of epithelial cancer cells in the biological sample.

11 (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the epithelial cancer is a lung, colon, or ovarian cancer.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the mammal is a human.

14-37 (Cancelled)

38. (Previously Presented) A method of detecting epithelial cancer cells in a biological sample from a mammal, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing the biological sample from the mammal; and
- (b) detecting an increase in copy number of a gene encoding SEQ ID NO:4 in the biological sample, thereby detecting the presence of epithelial cancer cells in the biological sample.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the detecting step further comprises:

- (i) contacting the gene with a probe specific for the gene under conditions in which the probe selectively hybridizes to the gene to form a stable hybridization complex; and
- (ii) detecting the hybridization complex.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the epithelial cancer is a lung, colon, or ovarian cancer.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the mammal is a human.